

(Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FEDERALISM, EXECUTIVE ORDER 13083, AND H. CON. RES. 299

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, our republic recently celebrated 222 years of liberty and freedom. For the last 209 years, these freedoms have been guaranteed by our Constitution.

In spite of this, the Clinton administration is now trying to undermine the Constitution through Executive orders, threatening the powers of Congress, the sovereignty of the States, and the rights of all Americans.

Our Founding Fathers demonstrated timeless wisdom in the crafting of our Constitution and Bill of Rights. The Constitution carefully defines the authority granted to each of the three branches of the Federal Government to ensure a separation and balance of Federal powers.

Additionally, the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution protects the rights of the States to self-determination, requiring that powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively or to the people.

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Both of these constitutional provisions guarantee the individual rights of American citizens throughout the democratic process. Our Bill of Rights and republic form of government ensure that the people maintain the ultimate authority to govern themselves.

The success of our Constitution is clear. The United States is the world's strongest economic power, providing a standard of living to Americans that is the envy of the world. Our Nation is also the world's foremost military power, providing strong protection to American citizens from foreign threats to our liberties and to our democratic principles.

Finally and most importantly, our government is the single greatest guarantor and protector of individual liberties in the world today. The freedom of speech, the freedom of religion, the freedom to own property, the freedom to vote are just a few of the liberties that American citizens enjoy, thanks to the wisdom and foresight of the framers of our Constitution.

Sometimes we take these liberties for granted, but benefits such as public safety, education and the finest health care system in the world should remind us that the Constitution provides us with much more than abstract principles.

In spite of the great successes of our Republic, President Clinton has dis-

regarded our Constitution with the issuance of executive order 13083.

First, the order requires Federal departments and agencies to review State regulations and to dictate State policy without regard to the decisions made by States' own legislatures and agencies.

Second, the order's broad and vague definition of what should be a Federal issue reserves little if any jurisdiction for State and local governments.

Third, by granting Federal jurisdiction over all matters related to international obligations, the executive order threatens to bypass the U.S. Congress, imposing on States and the American people provisions of international treaties or agreements that have not been ratified by the Senate.

Clearly this executive order directly violates the separation and division of powers as provided by the Constitution. It violates the authority of the U.S. Congress, the sovereign rights of States, and threatens the liberties of every American citizen.

In response to this disregard for the Constitution, I have introduced House Concurrent Resolution 299. This resolution sends a message to the American people that representatives in Congress will understand the Constitution and will uphold the principles of the Founding Fathers that have made this Nation so great.

The Congress will protect the rights of States to self-determination and prevent undue Federal intervention into State and local affairs. The Congress will protect the rights of American citizens to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, without unwarranted and unconstitutional intrusions by the Federal departments and Federal agencies.

This resolution also sends a message to the executive and judicial branches of the Federal Government: The Congress will defend the people it represents against Federal actions that undermine the Constitution and threaten the rights of all citizens.

Congress is paying close attention to the actions of the chief executive. We will closely scrutinize any action by any member of the executive branch that threatens to usurp the legislative authority of the Congress, the sovereignty of the States and the freedom of the American people.

Furthermore, Congress will seek to remedy any judicial interpretation of U.S. law that is inconsistent with the intent of Congress, that threatens State rights to self-determination or threatens the liberties guaranteed the people by the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I urge each of my colleagues to join me in defense of the powers of the Constitution and sovereignty of the rights of States, the rights of the people, by cosponsoring House Concurrent Resolution 299, reiterating the separation of powers that are established and preserved by our Constitution.

THE STATE OF UNITED STATES AGRICULTURE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. MINGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MINGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to discuss the state of the agriculture economy and to report to my colleagues the results of a hearing that was held by the House Committee on Agriculture on Thursday.

That hearing is the first hearing that we have held in the House Committee on Agriculture this session on the farm economy and how the 1996 farm law, farm bill is responding to the crises that we face.

I am pleased that we held the hearing. I regret, however, it has taken so long for us to focus on this problem.

First, I would like to just urge that all of my colleagues recognize the severity of the problem that we face, and probably no State illustrates this better than North Dakota. The State of North Dakota has seen a 98 percent drop in farm income in the last 2 years. It is such a precipitous drop that in North Dakota and the Red River Valley portion of Minnesota just to the east, we see record numbers of farmers selling out, closing down their operations and saying, in this strong national economy, there is no reason why we should be continuing our farming operations.

What I see, in the area that I represent in southern Minnesota and the Chair represents, is a looming crisis. It certainly is not as serious as what we face in the Red River Valley area, but it is one that has the potential of having a parallel dramatic impact.

In the State of Minnesota at large, farm income is down 57 percent from the first quarter of 1996, compared to the first quarter of 1998, 57 percent. Part of the reason that it is down is that in addition to the disease problems that are affecting wheat and barley in the Red River Valley area, we also have severe price depression for agriculture commodities.

Wheat is selling in the neighborhood of \$2.50 a bushel. This is a product that in some years is selling for \$3 to \$4 a bushel. Those would be the average years. At \$2.50 a bushel, wheat can be used as a feed grain. Barley is being used as feed grain.

This has an effect on the price of corn and soybeans. Corn is now selling in the Midwest for below \$2 a bushel. For those of you that are not familiar with what that means to farmers, it means that you lose money, as much as 30, 40 cents on every bushel of corn that you market. Many say, well, if you have a good year, that just means that you are going to have a bigger yield and you can make more money.

What farmers are facing is that the excitement of a bumper crop is being moderated and turning into a much more depressing situation, because the price is collapsing. What is more distressing is that the number of farm